

POOL SAFETY CHECKLIST



County of Los Angeles firefighters and paramedics have heard all too often, "I only looked away for just a few seconds!" Unfortunately, that's all it takes for a child to drown, **JUST A FEW SECONDS**.

Drowning accidents are a leading cause of death for children one to four years of age. Almost 70 percent of all drowning accidents occur in backyard swimming pools. Drowning accidents can occur in just a few inches of water. Most of these tragic accidents could have been prevented.

By following the pool safety checklist below, you can help to prevent drowning and near-drowning accidents:

- **NEVER** allow children to be alone when near water, make sure an adult is present.
- Make sure that the pool is secure at all times. The swimming pool "Fencing" ordinance in Los Angeles County requires that all swimming pools more than two feet in depth be surrounded by a protective fence of not less than five feet in height.
- Keep toys out of the pool or pool area when not in use.
- Keep items, which can be used for climbing into pool areas, away from fences.
- Mount approved flotation devices near the pool. Many toy flotation devices are thought to be lifesaving devices, they are not. They are toys!
- Remember, never dive into an above ground pool. Know the depth of the water before you attempt to dive.
- Keep a telephone outside near the pool. **DO NOT** leave children unattended to talk on the telephone.
- Post the 911 emergency telephone number on the telephone.

If a child or adult is in trouble in a pool:

- Don't panic, yell for help.
- Get the child/adult out of the pool immediately.
- Call 911 immediately for emergency medical service.
- Begin CPR, if necessary.
- If you are not trained in CPR, follow telephone instructions from the Fire Department until they arrive to assist you.

The County of Los Angeles Fire Department wants everyone to remember to exercise safety during any water recreational activity. Remember, the next time you are by the pool **JUST A FEW SECONDS** is all it takes for a life to be lost to this preventable tragedy.

P. Michael Freeman
Fire Chief

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY DROWNING AND NEAR-DROWNING FACTS

- Drowning is the leading cause of death for children one through four years of age in Los Angeles County and California.
- There is an average of 120 drowning incidents in Los Angeles County, each year.
- Since January 2001, there have been at least 15 drowning deaths in Los Angeles County
- More than 2,000 drowning deaths occurred in Los Angeles County from 1980 through 1991.
- 121 drowning incidents occurred in 2000
- Of those 121 drowning incidents, 22 of those resulted in death.
- Approximately 700 near-drownings were reported in Los Angeles County from 1988 through 1991. It was estimated that only 40 percent of the total number of near-drownings are reported.
- A near-drowning injury may cause permanent irreversible brain damage. The number of children requiring institutionalization for such injuries has more than doubled since 1984.
- Young males between the ages of one to five are at greatest risk.
- 75 percent of all drowning deaths occur in the backyard pool, spa or bathtubs
- Twenty-five percent of all children who have drowned or have nearly drowned have had swimming lessons.
- Approximately 90 percent of all married couples are divorced within the first year after a drowning or near-drowning of their child.

REMEMBER: CHILDREN DROWN WITHOUT A SOUND